

Preliminary summary of information on

The Bryan Lathrop House
120 East Bellevue

Commission on Chicago Historical
and Architectural Landmarks

January 8, 1973

THE BRYAN LATHROP HOUSE
(now the Fortnightly Club)
120 East Bellevue Place
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Date of Construction: 1891-92

Architect: Charles Follen McKim of McKim, Mead & White

Called "the most perfect piece of Georgian architecture in Chicago" (Alfred Hoyt Granger in Chicago Welcomes You), the Lathrop House was designed by Charles Follen McKim, staunch exponent of neo-classicism and guiding spirit of the noted New York firm of McKim, Mead & White.

Interestingly, this dignified, unostentatious residence, a derivative of the Georgian houses of the colonies in the 18th century, was built at precisely the same time that Frank Lloyd Wright was experimenting with horizontalism and functionalism in the Charnley House, a few blocks away on Astor Street.

Around the Lathrop House, other mansions were springing up from the ground like dandelions. As industry encroached ever nearer to the elaborate residences of Calumet, Prairie, Indiana, and Michigan avenues on the Near South Side, their wealthy owners were fleeing to the North Side, to build new domiciles in the newly opened area stretching along the lake from Oak Street to North Avenue - the area that soon came to be known as the Gold Coast. Even some of the North Side millionaires living just south of the Gold Coast were moving to the new, more elite area as their own began to decline somewhat.

Alfred Hoyt Granger

As John Drury wrote in his Old Chicago Houses:

The Gold Coast presented an unusual and interesting parade of what is called the Eclectic Period in American architecture. Here were Gothic turrets, Moorish doorways, French Renaissance mansards, Romanesque arches, Georgian balustrades, Italian balconies, and Spanish patios.

Potter Palmer and William Borden laid out a subdivision in Palmer's Lake Shore Drive Addition to Chicago, and Palmer apparently started the march up the Drive when he built his famous (castellated Gothic castle), designed by Cobb & Frost, on an entire block of land between Banks and Schiller streets. It is said that the house, with its lavish furnishings, cost \$1 million when completed in 1882.

Borden's mansion was also impressive - a great gray stone residence designed in the French Renaissance style by the New York architect Richard M. Hunt. Completed in 1884, it stood on the north corner of Bellevue Place and the Drive, immediately east of where the Lathrop House would later be built.

Across Bellevue and occupying the entire block south to Oak Street, was the huge gray stone house with turrets and an arched entrance designed by S. S. Beman in the early 1880s for the millionaire grain commissioner and Board of Trade member Nathaniel S. Jones. At the time of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, this house was the residence of General Joseph T. Torrence, a wealthy railroad man. Finally it became the home of Mrs. Edith Rockefeller McCormick.

Such was the setting into which Bryan Lathrop moved in 1892. Compared with the Palmer, Borden, and

Jones establishments, all of which have been supplanted by high-rise apartments, the Lathrop House was modest, both in cost and in appearance. Where it was not unusual for other houses in the neighborhood to cost upwards of \$75,000, the Lathrop House cost only \$40,000, and beside the architectural excesses of many of the neighboring mansions, the well-balanced proportions and clean lines of the Lathrop's Georgian facade seemed chaste, indeed. As the Chicago Economist of August 22, 1891, said, in reporting the start of construction, the house was "in the Colonial style of architecture with a decidedly Beacon Street tinge to it."

Bryan Lathrop had as designer of his house one of the best known and finest architects in the country--Charles Follen McKim of the New York firm of McKim, Mead & White. It is possible that the two became acquainted through Lathrop's uncle, Thomas B. Bryan, who was first vice president of the World's Columbian Exposition, when McKim came to Chicago in connection with his work on some of the Exposition buildings.

However, the Lathrop House, McKim's World's Fair buildings, the Edward T. Blair House, and the residence Stanford White designed for Robert W. Patterson Jr. at the corner of Burton Place and Astor Street (now the Bateman School) were Chicago's only buildings from the drawing boards of McKim Mead & White.

The Architect

Charles Follen McKim was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1847. His father was an ardent and well-known Abolitionist, one of the founders of The Nation magazine in 1863, and the family was closely connected with the William Lloyd

word choice?

In reporting the start of construction, The Chgo Econ stated: The House was in the...

re-structure

Simply breaking it.

The only Chgo Bldgs to come from...

Chgo Econ, Aug 22, 1891.

Who are they?

Garrison and Henry Villard families, In fact, the McKim and Garrison families had a joint home in Orange, New Jersey in 1866.

In 1867, after a year at Harvard and a few months in the New York architectural office of Russell Sturgis, young McKim went to Paris to study architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. During his three years there, he traveled extensively in France and in 1869 visited England, where he was deeply impressed by the Georgian architecture that had given rise to the Colonial--or Georgian--style in the British settlements in North America, both before and after the American Revolution.

Upon his return to the United States in 1870, McKim entered the firm of Gambrell & Richardson in New York. In 1872 he opened a small office of his own and formed the firm of McKim, Mead & Bigelow. That same year, the three partners took a trip to New England to measure and draw examples of Colonial architecture.

In 1878, McKim and White took a walking trip through southern France with the sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. In 1879, Bigelow retired from the firm, and it became McKim, Mead & White.

In his book-length study of McKim, the Chicago architect Alfred Hoyt Granger said that:

McKim never forgot his indebtedness to Richardson, although he departed so far from the Romanesque style, which Richardson had introduced and which he alone handled with any distinguished success.

In Boston's Copley Square, Henry Hobson Richardson's Trinity Church (1872-77) and McKim's Boston Public Library (1888-95) face each other, their contrasting styles graphically illustrating "how far the pupil

departed from the style of his master."

Taking as their models the Georgian houses of colonial days for unostentatious private dwellings such as the Lathrop House and the palatial edifices of the Italian Renaissance for monumental public buildings such as the Boston Public Library and for grandiose private buildings such as the J. P. Morgan Library and Villard Houses in New York, McKim, Mead & White achieved fame and great popularity.

"Almost overnight," according to Kimball and Edgell's History of Architecture, "Roman and Queen Anne gave way to Renaissance forms."

In a long article in the Architectural Record of September 1906, Henry W. Desmond and Herbert Croly spoke of the influence the firm of McKim, Mead & White had on American architecture;

....A powerful personality like that of Richardson, which found its best expression in certain rugged Romanesque architectural forms, made little or no permanent impression upon the course of American architectural development, while McKim, Mead & White, whose work was less individual, but whose spirit has been more supple and communicable, have had a widespread formative influence.

.....
....Their range of selection has included on the one hand the earliest phase of the Italian Renaissance or even of Florentine Romanesque, and it has included on the other hand the last phase of English Georgian. Moreover, inasmuch as the Renaissance itself was so dependent upon Roman architecture, they have naturally, when the occasion served, returned to the original Roman sources....

need to build to this
more of so significant

....The imitation is never lifeless...and it is never meaningless....

....they belong in their manner to the eighteenth century, just as they belong in their feeling to the sixteenth and seventeenth century....

As a result of the sudden death of the Chicago architect John W. Root on the eve of the World's Columbian Exposition, the Eastern firms--among them McKim, Mead & White--that had been invited to plan the buildings and grounds were left free to carry out their own ideas. The result of this was a White City composed for the most part of Roman adaptations. Among the most admired of these were McKim's Agricultural Building and his New York State Building.

"McKim had a way," said Royal Cortissoz in the Brickbuilder for February 1910, "of softening his severities when he felt that it was required." He was "a striking instance of the artist who consults the past for a kind of broad invigoration, never as a methodical copyist." Citing "the brilliant tour de force of the New York State Building at the Chicago Fair in 1893," Cortissoz said that McKim "made it a better building, a better piece of pure architecture, than the Villa Medicis (sic) at Rome, on which he modelled it."

The unexpected result of the Exposition, according to Kimball and Edgell, was that:

...the whole public architecture of the country was now turned into a monumental and classical design for Columbia University in New York, with its great domed library (1895).

In 1901, Daniel H. Burnham was placed at the head of the Commission for the Development of the Park

System of Washington. Associated with him was the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., the sculptor Saint-Gaudens, and McKim, who was charged with the remodeling and restoration of the White House and the building of a new War College.

In 1909, after a three-year illness, McKim died. Memorial meetings were held in New York and Washington, the speakers at the latter including President William Howard Taft.

Writing in the Brickbuilder, which devoted practically its entire issue of February 1910 to a eulogy of McKim, Royal Cortissoz said:

....It is in no uncomplimentary sense that they (McKim, Mead & White) may be described as the fashionable architects of their time.... It was their good fortune to come upon the scene just at a time when people of wealth were taking a new interest in the beautification of their environment. The Queen Anne cottage was doomed, as was the three-story-and-basement brown-stone "mansion" of our cities....Decidedly McKim, Mead & White were the architects for an expanding social era, as were those masters who built the city palaces and country villas of the rich Romans and Florentines of the Renaissance.

If they had stopped there they would still be gratefully remembered, but....Everything conspired to lead them on from architecture that was charming to architecture that was monumental....The essential history of McKim is to be traced in a long succession of heroic buildings, starting with the Villard block in New York and the Public Library in Boston, and coming down to the Pennsylvania Station in New York....

Too abrupt ↘

who are they?

Numerous art critics and historians have compared McKim and his work to the person and work of Alberti, early genius of the Italian Renaissance and forerunner of Leonardo da Vinci. Writing in the same issue of the Brickbuilder, Robert S. Peabody said:

....These two artists were alike even in the principles that guided their art....They were not greatly interested in logic. They sought beauty. They found it in its most perfect forms in classic art and they each applied it to the structures of their day....

From January 18 to February 6, 1910, a memorial exhibition of McKim's work was held at the Art Institute of Chicago. Selected by McKim's firm, the drawings and photographs had previously been shown in the Octagon Building in Washington, headquarters of the American Institute of Architects, which McKim had once headed. The following excerpt is from the Art Institute's catalog:

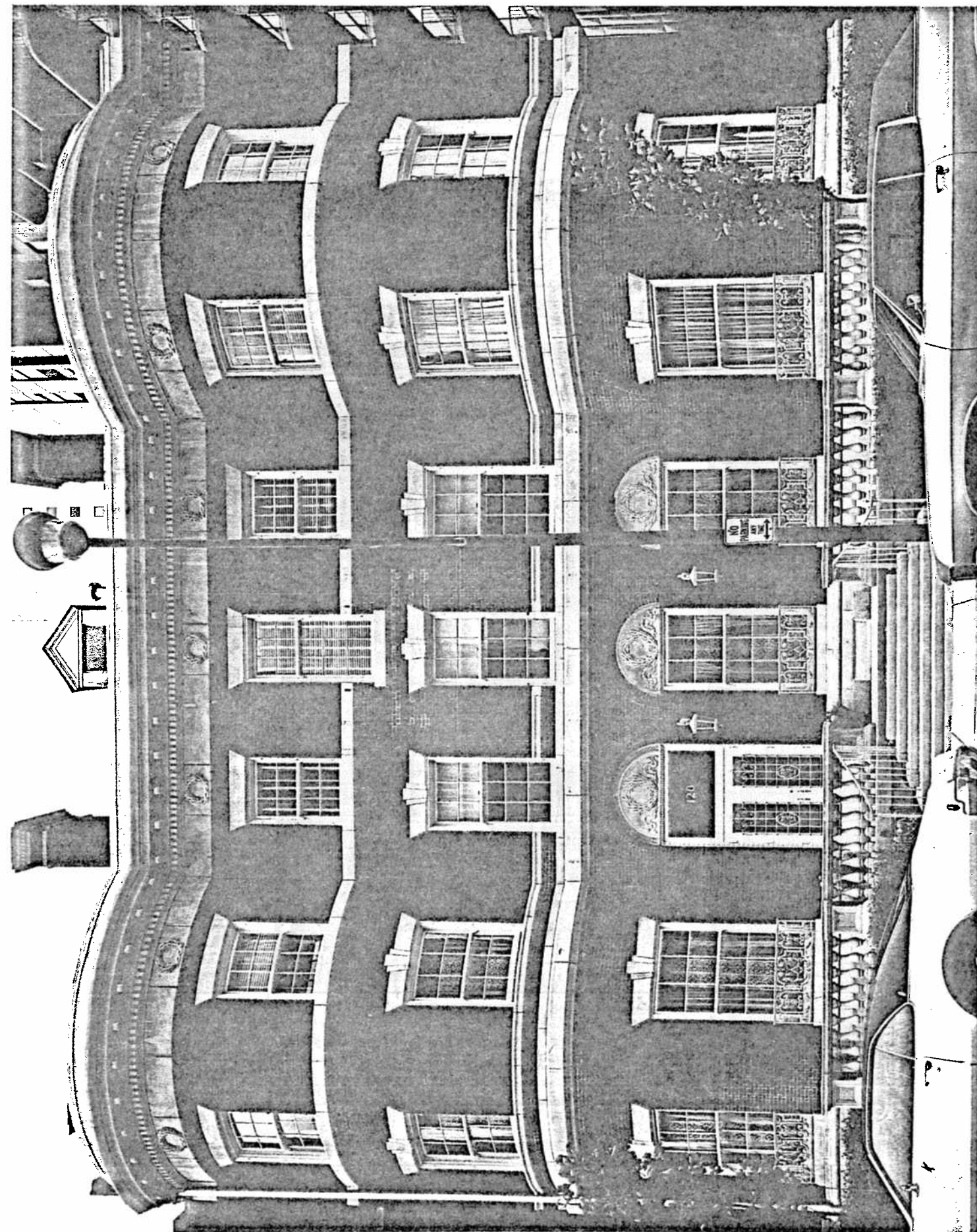
The quality of Mr. McKim's work combined to an unusual degree scholarly correctness and profound artistic feeling, with the result that his work reverently following classical models, was yet imbued with the individuality inseparable from the best architecture....

...there justly came to him honors, both academic and professional, in greater measure than to any other American architect.

Among McKim's great achievements was the founding of the American Academy in Rome. Among his great honors was the Gold Medal of the A.I.A. presented posthumously at the Washington Memorial Service.

The Lathrop House - Exterior

An unusually fine facade in the classic manner,





related to the Georgian style of the eighteenth century. The shallow relieving arches over the openings of the first floor, the scale of the decoration over the three central ones, the relative emphasis in the two string courses and the cornice, and the vigor given by the projection of the ample bays at each end are the most obvious features of a masterly design, clear, open, urbane. In part because of the placing of the door, the facade carries its symmetry easily, without rigidity or undue emphasis. The length of the central window of the third floor, which breaks the string course below the other windows here, was related to a light, openwork balcony outside it, now removed....

So begins J. Carson Webster's description of the Lathrop House in Chicago's Famous Buildings, edited by Arthur Siegel.

He goes on to say that "similar balconies were outside the three central windows of the second floor." An early photograph and the architectural drawings indicate, however, that a single balcony ran across the three central windows of the second floor. These balconies were of wrought iron with some cast-iron parts, and a prominent feature of their decoration was square-leaf rosettes.

The house is 3 1/2 stories high over a raised basement. Basically rectangular, it is 68' wide, 40' deep, 50' high, its lines softened by the rounded projecting bays, mentioned by Webster, at the east and west ends of the front elevation.

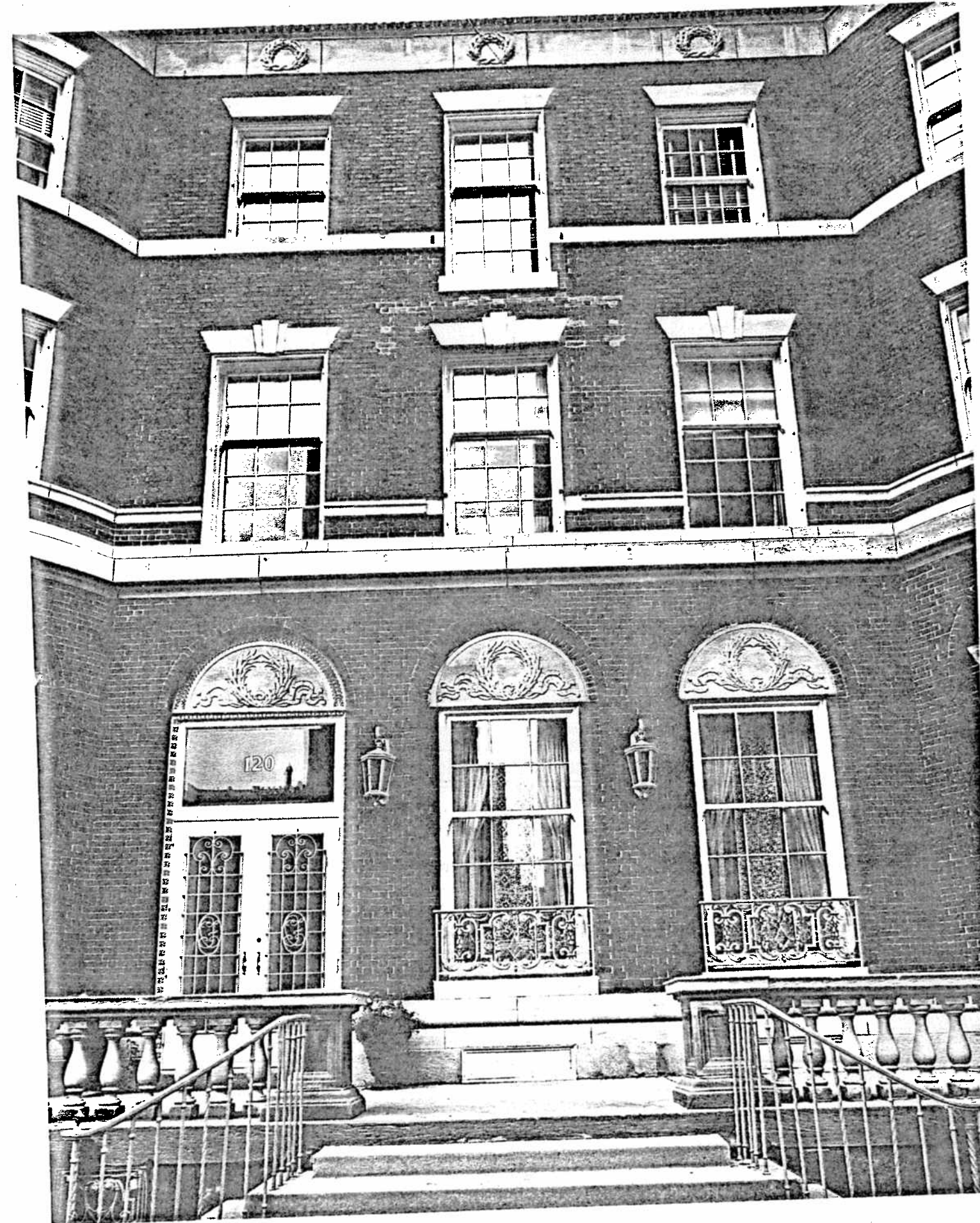
The base of the house, to a height of 5', and the large, open limestone terrace extending from the middle of the east bay to the middle of the west are of Bedford limestone. The balustrade and steps are of the same material. Above the base,

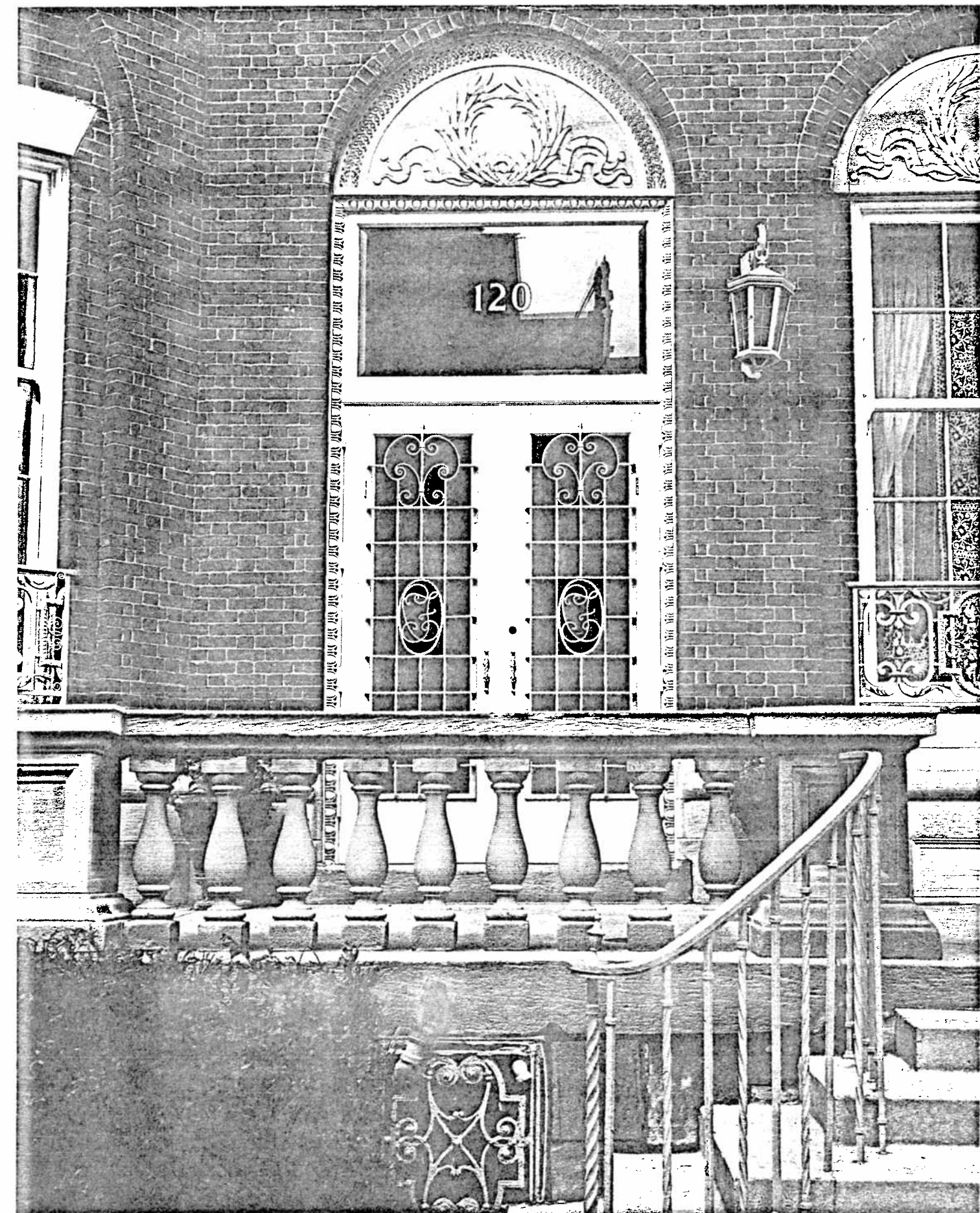
the front and original part of the east wall are of dark-red, Flemish bond brick, with nearly black headers. (Bricks are laid with either their ends or their sides toward the face of the wall; the former are headers, the latter, stretchers. In Flemish bond, each course, or layer, consists of alternate headers and stretchers so laid as to break joints.) The dark headers are over-fired bricks whose surfaces have become vitrified by the intense heat. In McKim's day, such bricks were generally considered rejects, but McKim saw their decorative value and used them extensively. From their use in the memorial gates he designed for Harvard University, the type of wall employing them came to be known as "Harvard brick" and is still widely used.

The walls of the ballroom and kitchen added by the Fortnightly Club to the rear of the house, on the east and west, respectively, are, like the original rear wall, of common brick. The west wall is a party wall.

The front entrance--a glass double door with transom, covered with a wrought-iron grille--is placed off-center, in the westernmost of the three center bays. The original double door was of paneled wood with brass knockers and had glass panels at the top covered with crisscross bronze bars. A service entrance on the east side of the house leads into the basement.

The windows are double-hung throughout, generally six-over-six on the second and third floors and six-over-nine on the first floor. However, the three central windows on the second floor and the middle window on the third floor (where the balconies used to be) are extended down to the floor and are therefore six-over-nine. The window frames and glass in the projecting bays curve with the bays.





The first-floor front windows have low, ornate wrought-iron grilles, recently painted light blue, and the front basement windows have complete grilles of simpler design. With the exception of the side basement window nearest the front, the rest of the basement windows are covered with ordinary safety bars.

With the exception of the three central openings on the first floor (two windows and door), the windows of the facade and east elevation have flat stone lintels with splayed ends, and the lintels on the first and second floors have keystones. Webster mentions the "shallow relieving arches over the openings of the first floor." In the case of the three central openings, the semicircular areas that are formed above them by these arches are stone-filled and decorated with wreaths in low relief. Egg-and-dart molding of wood lines the arch that frames the entrance.

The wreaths above the three openings are echoed at the top of the facade in the low-relief wreaths of the bed-molding, placed one over each of the facade's seven bays. The bed-molding and other three stringcourses are of stone, and the bed-molding originally supported a wood cornice embellished with modillions and dentils. That cornice collapsed in 1972 but has been replaced with an exact reproduction in fibre-glass. Above the cornice, there originally was a stone balustrade in which groups of five balusters alternated with rectangular panels decorated with festoons in low relief. This is long since gone.

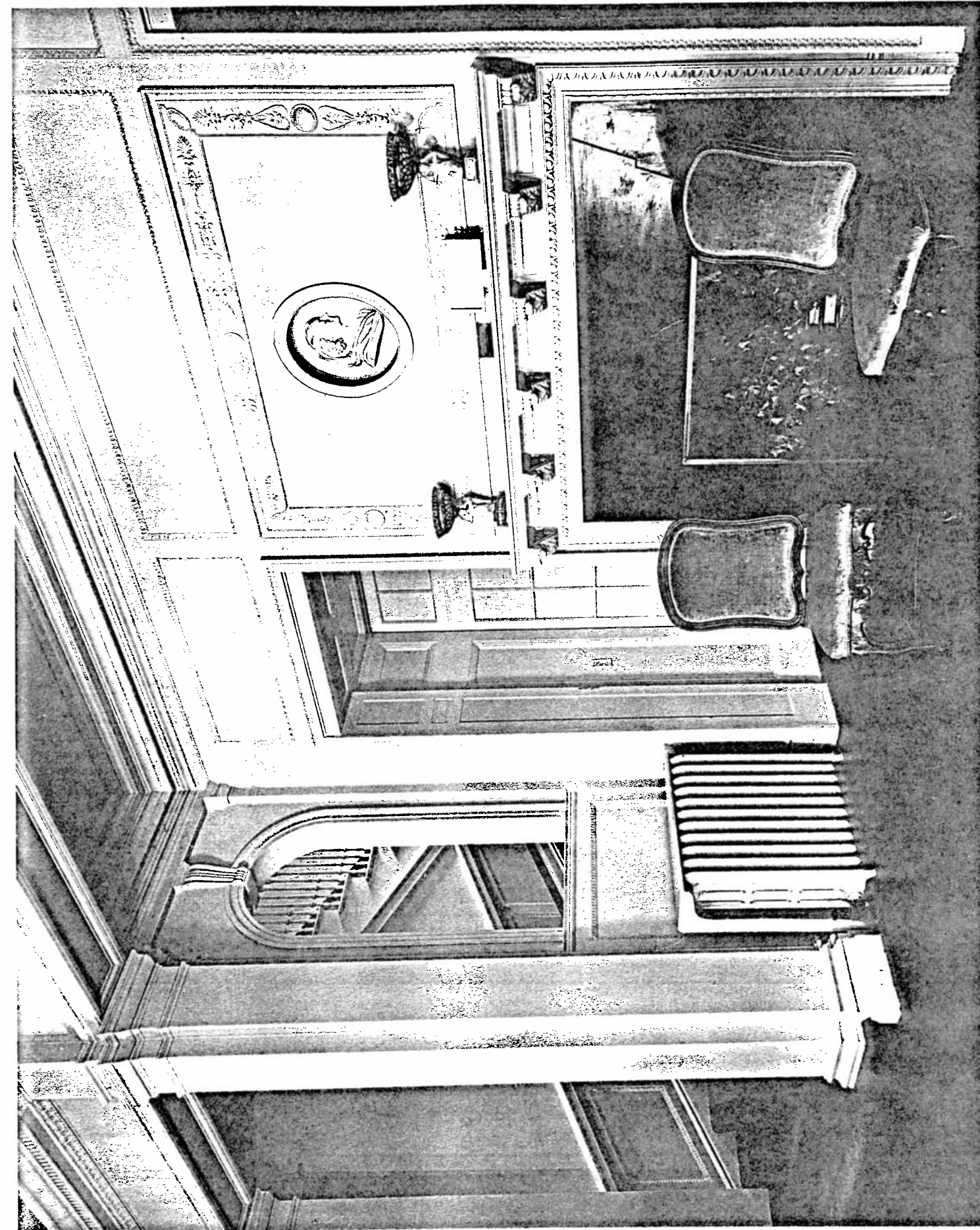
The roof is low and hipped. Dormer windows on all four sides serve the attic rooms. Four large brick chimneys and some smaller chimneys connect with the fireplaces located in nearly every room in the house and with the furnace in the basement.

Changes

Over the years, so many alterations and additions--most of them minor--have been made to the house that it is next to impossible to determine, in the case of many of the interior features, in particular, just what is original design and what is alteration. As early as 1896 we find the Chicago architectural firm of Holabird & Roche, who were the superintending architects on the construction of the house, doing revolving cupboards with bookshelves on one side and cue racks on the other, for the billiard room. In 1899 the same firm designed andirons for the library fireplace. In 1901 and 1909 they made various alterations and additions, interior and exterior, and in 1909 the architect A. D. Jenkins drew up plans for some changes. Then, when the Fortnightly Club acquired the house in 1922, the Chicago architect Alfred Hoyt Granger (1867-1939), who had studied under McKim, was engaged to make the necessary changes to transform the house from a private dwelling to a clubhouse.

The Lathrop House - Interior

The front door opens into a vestibule with marble dado and mosaic floor (now covered). This opens into a large reception hall with white, wood-paneled walls and a large fireplace. The wood mantel, painted white, is classical in design, and the surround is of black slate edged in brass. Above the mantel, a profile in low relief of the Fortnightly Club's founder, Mrs. Kate Newell Doggett, is set cameo-like, within an oval niche, which itself is set into a rectangular panel framed with delicate molding. The room has an elaborately molded cornice, and the wall paneling is decorated with egg-and-dart molding, of which much use is made throughout the house.





It is not known how this foyer was lighted originally, but today it has two crystal chandeliers. All major rooms on the first floor open off this room, which measures 28' x 15'.

Throughout the house are beautiful fireplaces, no two exactly alike, although most are of classical design. Some are framed by fluted or symmetrically molded trim with corner blocks, some by fluted pilasters, some by colonettes. Some have a plain frieze and simple mantel shelf, some have a more elaborate frieze and bed-moldings beneath the mantel shelf. Nearly all have a surround of slate or brick painted black and with a brass rim.

The original oval dining room, still used for that purpose, occupies the west front corner of the first floor. On the north wall is a large fireplace currently surmounted by a large mirror with gilt frame. Truly an oval room, the sliding door separating it from the reception hall is curved and the ceiling is coved. The walls are of plaster with a wood chair rail, and it is said that they originally were hung with brocade to match the red carpeting that the Lathrops had throughout the first floor and on the staircase. The three-light sconces to be found in this room, the drawing room, and elsewhere in the house were originally gas fixtures. The room measures nearly 18' x 24'.

At the east end of the first floor is what was originally the library and is now the drawing room. A beautiful, spacious room of quiet charm and dignity, it can be closed off from the reception hall with double folding doors. The east wall is wood-paneled, and elsewhere there is wood-panelled trim. Originally stained dark, the wood was stripped and restained a warm walnut color during the 1928 redecorating supervised by Mrs. John Alden Carpenter, who selected the room's Biedermeier furniture in Europe. It is

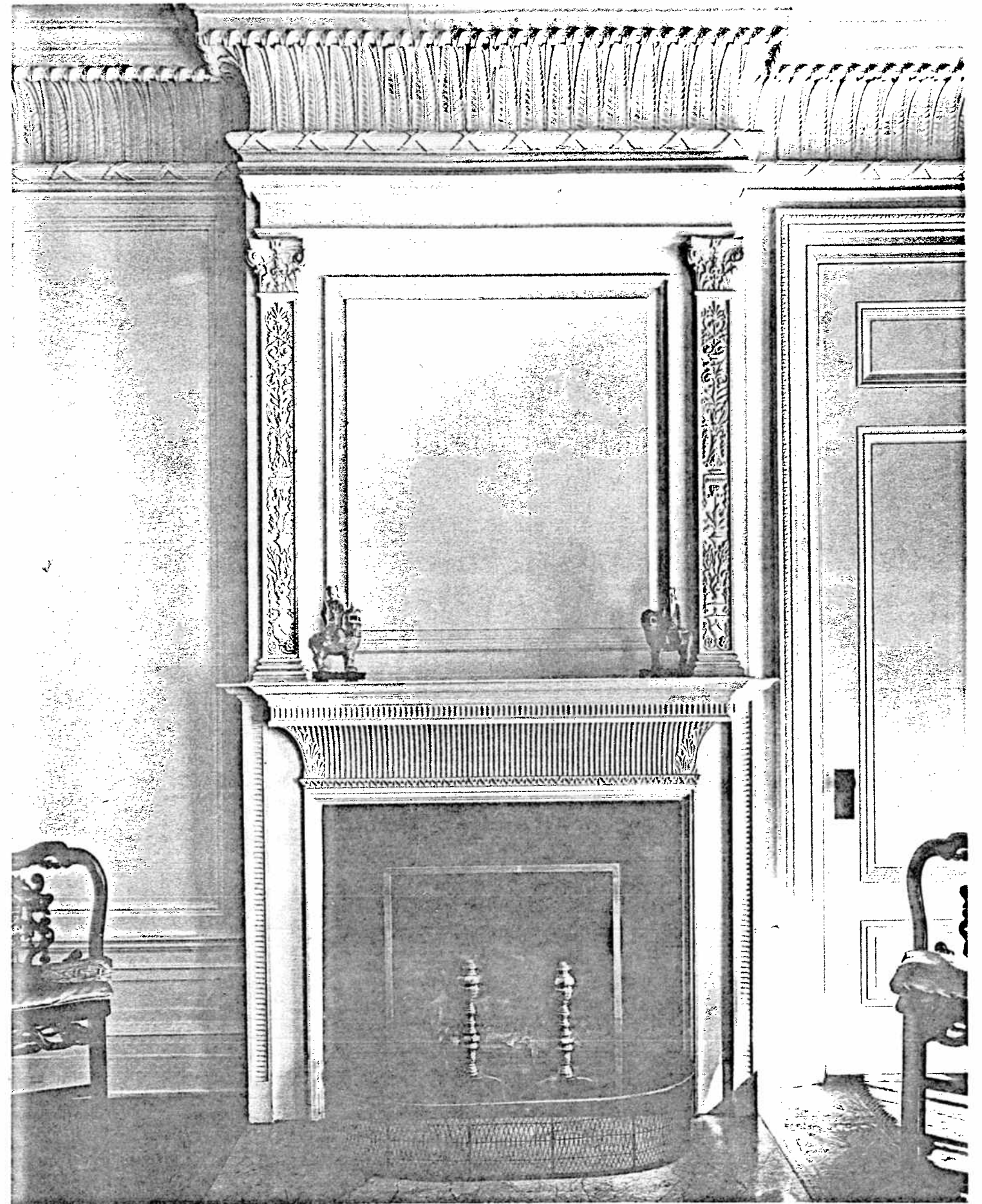
not known when the built-in bookcases that originally lined much of the wall space were removed. The fireplace is on the wood-paneled east wall. In contrast to the fireplaces in other rooms, most of which are classical in design, its mantel is molded in delicate patterns of rosettes, buds, and dentils.

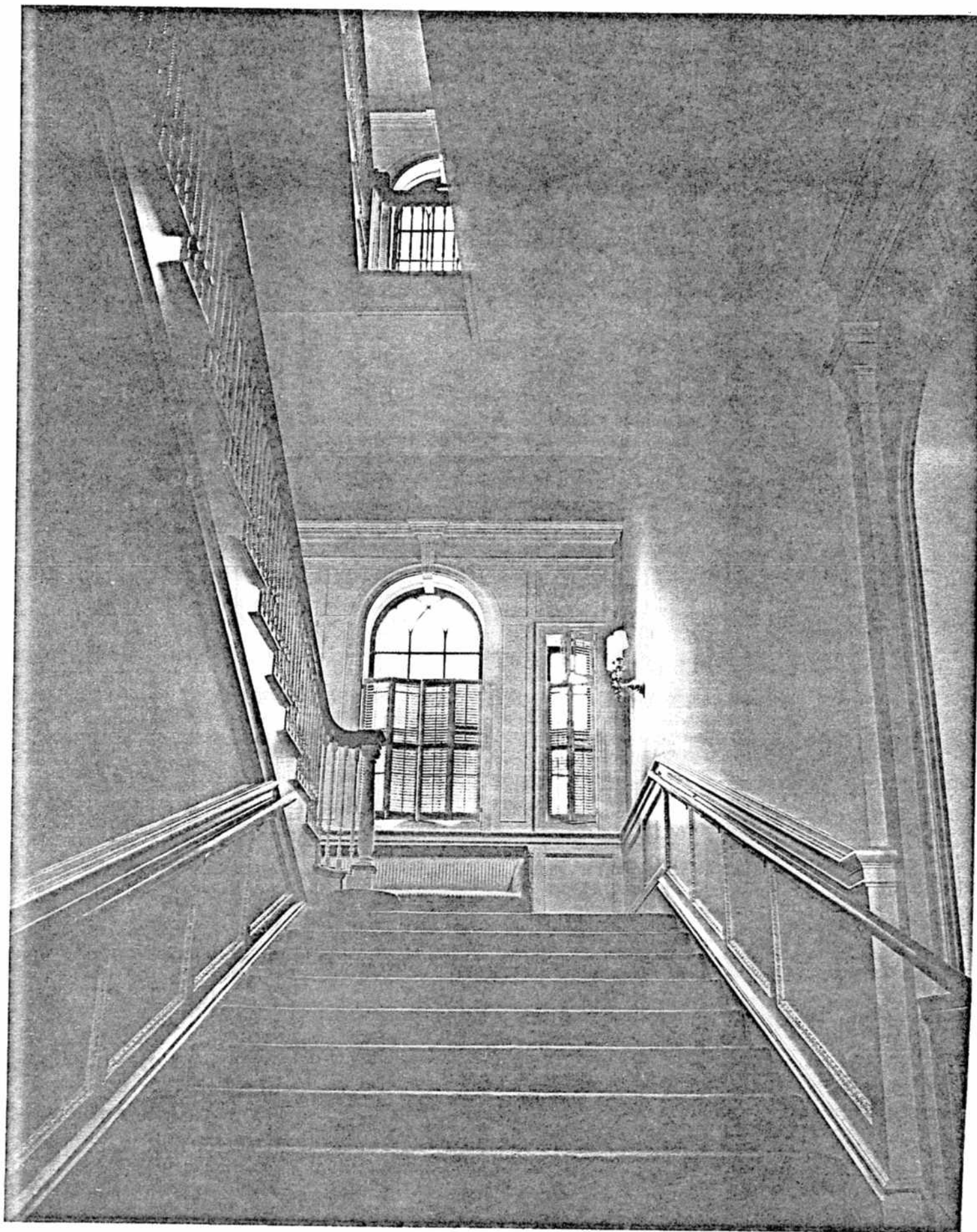
Apparently the room's original design included two wood pillars at the north end. These seem to have been removed in the early 1900s, judging from a set of architectural drawings, and then restored during Mrs. Carpenter's redecorating project. Certainly the painting of the modified acanthus capitals black, in contrast to the brown wood of the shafts, was a Biedermeier touch.

The built-in cabinets on either side of the room, just beyond the pillars, were installed in 1935 to display some valuable books and Staffordshire china.

Like the oval dining room, the drawing room has two large windows in the projecting bay at the south end, but the drawing room also has two large windows in the east wall, one on either side of the fireplace and set within large arches. The room measures approximately 19' x 27'.

To the east of the entrance, between it and the drawing room, is a small square room that was originally the parlor. Unlike the first floor's other major original rooms, this one does not have a 14' ceiling, Mrs. Carpenter having installed a 12' ceiling below what was a domed ceiling. The cornice is in the same modified acanthus pattern as the capitals of the drawing room pillars, only here there is a reed molding below. This so-called White Room, with its two large windows covered with exquisite lace curtains, its chaste black-tile and brass-rimmed fireplace with fluted white wood mantel,





and its antique Chinese furnishings, is charming and intimate.

Two small interconnecting halls lead off the reception hall to the north of the dining room. One leads to what originally was the butler's pantry and is now merely a corridor between the dining room and the added first-floor kitchen (the original kitchen was in the basement and food was brought up by dumb waiter). The other leads to a powder room, which may have been there originally. In the space between them, where the servants' staircase was originally, is a small coatroom. Because of Fire Department regulations, the spiral staircase of wood had to be replaced with a fireproof one added at the rear of the house when the first-floor kitchen addition was constructed in 1965-66.

To the north of the drawing room, where the Lathrops' billiard room was originally, is the ballroom/assembly room, added by the club. This room, measuring 39' x 48'2" and painted entirely in white, has a small stage at one end, three windows on each side, and, just off it, a cloakroom and washroom. Four elaborate crystal chandeliers hang from the 16' ceiling, and chaste pilasters decorate all four walls.

A wide staircase leads from the foyer to the second floor. Through an open arch on one side of the stairway, near the bottom, persons descending the stairs have a pleasant view of the fireplaces in the White Room and drawing room--a typical McKim touch of added charm. At the half-way landing are three shuttered windows, the center one taller than the others, mullioned, arched, and with a keystone in the arch. The staircase wall is white and the dado is wood. Like the paneling in the reception hall, this has ~~dentil~~ molding. Above the second floor, the staircase narrows, but the landing between the second and third floors has the same window treatment.

On the second floor, there is another oval dining room directly above the one below. Its elaborate fireplace is topped by a large, decorative mirror. The club papered this room in an unusual scenic wallpaper designed in Alsace in 1795 and later reprinted from the original blocks. Like the oval room below, this one has a curved door leading from the hallway, but here the door is hinged, not sliding. The cornice is embellished with dentils. The room was originally a bedchamber, and what originally was a connecting bathroom to the north is now an auxiliary kitchen.

What was the master bedroom at the southeast corner of the house--a room measuring approximately 19' x 26'--is now the club's library. It has a large, elaborately molded fireplace on the east wall. The present powder room at the northeast corner apparently was Mrs. Lathrop's dressing room and bathroom, and there was a connecting door between. The dressing room, too, had a fireplace, on the north wall, but this has been moved to the south wall, where it is purely decorative.

Adjoining Mrs. Lathrop's dressing room on the west was Mr. Lathrop's dressing room and bath, also with fireplace. The plumbing has been removed, but the room is still paneled in golden oak and still has built-in cabinets.

Between the two former bedrooms is a long, narrow room, with a fireplace at each end, that was the Lathrops' private sitting room. The club rents this room by the year to the Colonial Dames of America.

On the third floor were three guest rooms, a den, three servants' rooms, a linen room, and two bathrooms. There are five bathrooms now. The guest rooms were at the front of the house and had fireplaces; the servants' rooms were at the rear

and did not. At one time, the club rented out these rooms, but now just two are kept for overnight use by club members or their out-of-town guests.

On the attic floor were more servants' quarters, although at first this floor may have been used just for storage and workrooms. The layout was altered repeatedly until there were six small bedrooms, a bathroom (the club added another), and a storeroom. Not currently in use, the rooms in this half-story under the roof have sharply sloping ceilings and odd shapes and get their light and air from dormer windows, air vents, and the skylight over the central hallway.

There were many rooms in the well-designed basement, including a good-sized servants' sitting room at the southwest corner, a large laundry at the northeast corner, an immense L-shaped kitchen in the center, four coal rooms, a furnace room, a wine cellar, and a tiny servant's room. Here, too, was the elevator machinery.

The Lathrop House was one of the first residences to boast an elevator. It was, of course, hydraulic, and it was not until 1935 that electrical controls were installed. Finally, in the 1960s, the club acquired a new elevator.

The Lathrops

Bryan Lathrop was born in Alexandria, Virginia (then part of the District of Columbia), on August 6, 1844. He was the son of Jedediah Lathrop, who had married into the prominent Bryan family of Virginia and acquired wealth in the banking and coal businesses. The young Lathrop had planned to enter the University of Virginia, but the Civil War closed it, so he went to Europe in 1862 and studied with private tutors. In 1865 he moved to

Especially considered was the fact that the BRYAN LATHROP HOUSE is an important element in the early development of the Gold Coast area. Built in 1891, the house remains as one of Chicago's best examples of 19th century Georgian ^{Revival} design, the work of the renowned American architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White.

Chicago and entered the real estate office of his wealthy uncle, Thomas B. Bryan. Apparently his family came to Chicago at the same time and his father also entered the real estate business here.

Thomas B. Bryan was a leader in Chicago financial circles. Also born in Alexandria (in 1828), he was a graduate of Harvard Law School and in 1852 came to Chicago, where he became the senior member of the firm of Bryan and (John) Borden. After some time, he retired from general practice and entered the real estate business, acquiring extensive property interests.

Four years after his arrival in Chicago, Bryan went to live in DuPage County, in the little hamlet of Cottage Hill. His brother-in-law, Jedediah Lathrop joined the exodus of wealthy Chicagoans to the country, and the two of them did much to develop the village that was renamed, at Bryan's suggestion, Elmhurst.

On land he bought in Chicago, Thomas B. Bryan founded Graceland Cemetery in 1860 and served as its president for many years. Also in 1860, he built a concert auditorium, Bryan Hall, on Clark Street north of Washington. Many of the Civil War meetings were held there, as Bryan was a prominent figure in war work.

Bryan was also founder of the Fidelity Safe Depository, which saved Chicagoans millions of dollars in the Great Fire of 1871. He retired from business in 1868 and later, having headed the committee which won the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 for Chicago, served as the Fair's first vice president. He died in Washington, D. C., in 1906.

Becoming one of the most successful real estate men in Chicago, Bryan Lathrop specialized in serving as trustee and manager of estates. An extremely

wealthy man, he was a civic as well as financial leader. He was a trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago from 1894 until his death in 1916. He was a trustee of Newberry Library from 1896 to 1916. He became treasurer and manager of Graceland Cemetery in 1867 and, following his uncle's death, became president, a position he held until his own death. He was president of the Chicago Relief and Aid Society for two years. As a commissioner of Lincoln Park, he was responsible for its extension northward.

But his greatest interest was the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. His name first appears in the records of the Orchestral Association, founded in 1890, as a contributor during the orchestra's fourth season, 1894-95 (when it was called The Chicago Orchestra.) At that time he gave \$250 to "The Fund for the Support of the Orchestra." This was the beginning of a period of 22 years during which Lathrop gave unstintingly of his time, his efforts, and his money for the development and support of a first-rate orchestra that Chicago could call its own.

In January 1895 he was elected a trustee and vice president of the Orchestral Association, and in December 1899 he became president, serving until his death. Throughout these years, Lathrop staunchly led the Association through numerous financial crises. It is of interest to note that some of the fund-raising luncheons and dinners to which he beckoned the trustees and other friends of the orchestra were held in the house on Bellevue Place.

It was Lathrop, too, who more than anyone else was responsible for the erection of Orchestra Hall in 1904. One of the persons he inspired to give lavishly to the support of the orchestra and the building of the hall was his sister, Florence.

The widow of Marshall Field's brother Henry, who died in 1890, she had married the Virginia-born writer and lawyer Thomas Nelson Page, who later (1913-19) served as ambassador to Italy. The Henry Field Gallery at the Art Institute contains Field's collection of paintings of the Barbizon School.

Photographs of Bryan Lathrop as an elderly man show him to have had white hair, a white moustache, a trim white beard, and very kindly eyes. He was distinguished-looking and apparently was a social figure, as well as a civic and business leader, for he belonged to such clubs as the University and Saddle and Cycle, both of which he served as president, the Chicago Club, Chicago Literary Club, Chicago Golf Club, the Cliff Dwellers, Onwentsia, the South Shore Country Club, the Chicago Historical Society, the Century Club of New York, and the Metropolitan Club of Washington.

Mrs. Lathrop was also a member of a distinguished family. Born Helen Lynde Aldis, she was the daughter of Judge Asa O. Aldis, who, like his father before him, served on the Supreme Court of Vermont. One of her brothers was Owen F. Aldis, a lawyer who went into real estate and put up the Monadnock Building (1889-91), designed by Burnham and Root and famous as the last masonry wall-bearing building and an outstanding example of the Chicago School of Architecture. Her other brother was Arthur T. Aldis, who, in 1890, joined Owen and other family members in the real estate firm of Aldis, Aldis & Northcote, which later became Aldis & Company. All of the Aldises were supporters of civic, philanthropic and cultural enterprises. Following the death in childbirth of Owen F. Aldis's wife, he and his son Owen lived in a guest suite on the third floor of the Lathrop's house.

The annual Thanksgiving concerts by the Chicago Symphony String Quartet which the Lathrops gave at their home were famous throughout Chicago society. The music and billiard room that has been supplanted by the Fortnightly Club's ball-room/assembly room was the scene of these and other musical events. This room had a low stage at one end, and hundreds of small gilt chairs were set up for the guests. (A few of these chairs are still in use in the second-floor powder room.)

A cousin of Bryan Lathrop has said that seven to nine courses were served at the Lathrops' dinner parties and that the dining table was very heavy and double-width. The Lathrops kept a staff of ten servants, she said. She also has described Mrs. Lathrop as having been "not beautiful but fascinating" and the owner of many beautiful jewels. "She was in the habit of reading parts of The Iliad or The Odyssey to quiet her nerves before going to parties," reports this same relative.

Bryan Lathrop died on May 13, 1916, at the age of 71, and the funeral was held in the chapel at Graceland. The list of pallbearers testifies to the important position he held in the life of Chicago. Active pallbearers were Cyrus H. McCormick, John A. Holabird, Walter M. Ellis, Charles H. Hamill, John P. Wilson Jr., Arthur Hall, and Russell Tyson. Included among the 20 honorary pallbearers were such notables as Edward L. and Martin A. Ryerson, Robert Hall McCormick, Frederick Stock, John P. Wilson, Watson F. Blair, and William Holabird. The concerts of November 24-25, 1916, were designated a Bryan Lathrop Memorial.

Lathrop left a bequest of \$700,000 to the Orchestral Association for the establishment of a school of music. The principal was to be held in trust, with the income being paid to his widow during her lifetime and, after her death, to the Orchestral Association.

After her husband's death, Mrs. Lathrop spent much of her time in Maine, Florida, and Italy, and it was in 1922 that she sold the house to the Fortnightly Club. She died at the Lathrops' summer home in York Harbor, Maine, on August 3, 1935, at the age of 86.

With her death, her husband's legacy to the Chicago Orchestral Association became available, and it was used to endow the Civic Orchestra, founded in 1919 as a training ground for instrumentalists.

The Art Institute, too, was enriched by Lathrop, with the receipt of his collection of 379 etchings and lithographs by James McNeill Whistler--a collection that is said to have hung in the panels of the Lathrops' reception hall. The Lathrop Collection, which had been shown at the Newberry Library in 1912, was first exhibited at the Art Institute in 1917.

In addition, Lathrop left his own library to the Newberry Library.

The Fortnightly Club

The Fortnightly Club, founded in 1873, was probably Chicago's first important women's club, antedating the Chicago Woman's Club by a few months. Its founder was Mrs. Kate Newell Doggett, wife of William E. Doggett, boot-and-shoe-manufacturing tycoon. It was--and remains--a cultural and social club. Its members have always been women of lively intellects to whom the title "gentlewomen" is applicable. Not all of them possess wealth or social position, but all do possess savoir faire. Though the club decries being called "exclusive," the architect Alfred Hoyt Granger, in his 1933 book

Chicago Welcomes You, called the Fortnightly "the most truly highbrow of the many women's organizations of this amazing city."

When it began, the Fortnightly was in effect an adult education course for women of intelligence and wealth who would have gone to college, if a college education for women had not been rare in those days. During its first ten years, the ladies studied the history of Western Civilization. Then they moved on to a course in literature. They were given reading lists and were expected not only to listen to lectures at their fortnightly meetings but also to take turns in delivering lectures.

Some of the club's members were active in social reform movements--in fact, most of the leaders of social change belonged to the Fortnightly--but it was the Chicago Woman's Club that got things done in this area, the Fortnightly, as a club, being primarily concerned with the arts and social gatherings.

One of the activists was Louise deKoven Bowen, wife of Joseph T. Bowen. An intimate friend of Jane Addams, with whom she frequently went on speaking tours, she was treasurer and later president of Hull House. One time, during World War I, when the Fortnightly Club withdrew its invitation for her controversial pacifist friend to speak, Mrs. Bowen called a special meeting and brought Miss Addams to the platform. Called "ablest of all Chicago's wealthy women in public work" by Ernest Poole in his Giants Gone, Mrs. Bowen was in the forefront of the movements for women's suffrage, a minimum-wage law, the eight-hour day, factory inspection, and juvenile protection.

In her book Open Windows, she tells how her father forbade her to play in Mrs. Doggett's yard, giving as his reason:

"I do not know her, but the neighbors say she is queer. She cuts her hair short and is a suffragist, which means she wants to wear men's clothes and act like a man. She is president of a woman's club organized for some strange purpose, and is very literary and spends all her time reading books. I think she is a dangerous woman and I don't want you to be subjected to such influences, so never go there again!"

In later years, when Mrs. Bowen was made an honorary member of the Fortnightly, she told the story at the luncheon given in her honor.

Florence Kelly, also associated with Jane Addams at Hull House and author of The Slums of Big Cities, was a member. So was social worker Julia Lathrop (no relation to Bryan).

Another activits was Mrs. Emmons Blaine, financial angel of the Chicago Dwelling Association, Francis W. Parker School, and many other worthy causes.

Both Mrs. William Vaughn Moody, wife of the great American poet, and Harriet Monroe, founder of Poetry magazine and a noted poet in her own right, were members.

Edith Rockefeller McCormick, whose mansion stood across the street from the Fortnightly, was one of those who read papers at club meetings in the days when this was expected of members. Bertha Palmer, chatelaine of the Potter Palmer castle, was not only beautiful and rich but also intelligent, efficient, and interested in labor relations. She served as president 1901-03.

Other presidents have included such well-known figures as Rebecca A. Judson, whose husband, Harry

Pratt Judson, was the second president of the University of Chicago; Harriet Hammond McCormick (Mrs. Cyrus H.); Helen Palmer Dawes (Mrs. Rufus C.); Mrs. Adelaide Hibbard Gregory, who at the age of 80 in 1939 was the last society leader still living on Prairie Avenue; Susan Sudler (Mrs. Carroll, mother of the well-known music patron and singer Louis Sudler), and Ellen Henrotin (Mrs. Charles).

It has been said that the list of Fortnightly members reads like the index to a history of Chicago and that practically every major street name is included. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Louis Greene Stevenson was an out-of-town member and stayed at the club at the time of her son Adlai's marriage to Ellen Borden, who lived in the house next door.

The fact that one of the early members was Mrs. Bryan Lathrop doubtless had a great deal to do with the club's acquisition of the Lathrop mansion in 1922. The purchase price was more than \$121,000, and nearly \$39,000 was spent on renovation and alterations at that time. The club took possession of the house in 1923, the year of its 50th anniversary. More money was spent on redecorating in 1928 and at various times since. Currently, for its 100th anniversary in 1973, the Fortnightly is spending many thousands of dollars on interior and exterior renovation.

Over the years, many members have contributed fine furnishings to the house, and the Fortnightly has been the setting for many glittering social events, including debuts and wedding receptions. For many years, dancing classes were held in the ballroom, and the Junior League met in the house for several years before acquiring its own house on Astor Street.

The club currently has 325 active members and 5

honorary members. There is also a junior membership limited to 75 women under the age of 40. The Contemporary Club, a merger of the Wednesday Club and the Young Fortnightly, holds an affiliate membership.

Many mansions along the Gold Coast have disappeared. When the Borden House was demolished in 1960 to make room for the Carlisle apartments, the Fortnightly resisted the offers of the Carlisle owners, who wanted to take over this property, also.

Two studies of the house have been made by the Historic American Buildings Survey--one in 1956 and one in 1964--and a plaque installed in the vestibule cites the house as "an important example of our architectural heritage."